

as 20 percent, in many cases more like 30 percent, and I am told, in some cases, even more than that.

Ultimately, we drive up infrastructure costs when we make the projects Federal. It doesn't need to be this way, because most of these are not Federal projects. That is why my amendment also addresses two key regulatory challenges in our infrastructure context.

One, it reforms the NEPA process to ensure projects are given certain timelines and not stalled out by frivolous lawsuits. It reforms NEPA so that our infrastructure money actually goes to NEPA rather than resulting in endless delays brought about by NEPA and NEPA-related litigation.

Two, it repeals the Davis-Bacon wage requirements that artificially increase the labor costs beyond what the market demands—labor costs that are especially important and hard felt right now given the labor shortage.

The Senate has a choice today. You can choose to pay less and build more. You can offer Americans a tax cut—a tax cut that will affect poor and middle-class Americans most acutely, most immediately, most directly—and it will also simultaneously provide long-term solvency to the highway trust fund and lower the costs of our Nation's infrastructure projects.

Or, alternatively, if you don't want to vote for this, you can choose our current path, which is to continue to saddle the American people with debt, more inflation, financial insolvency, and more inevitable taxes. You can also vote against it and choose to continue the current practice of allowing for endless, needless, pointless delays in our infrastructure projects that really harm Americans.

Look, at the end of the day, we just want more of our tax dollars going into funding steel and concrete to go into the ground so that America's moms and dads can spend less time stuck in gridlock traffic and more time with their families. The choice seems very clear to me.

I urge all of my colleagues to vote for this amendment to build more and pay less.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate for 2 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, I have great respect for my colleague from Utah, but I am in firm opposition to his amendment.

It would completely undo months of hard work, bipartisan hard work. The two major bipartisan infrastructure bills that Chairman CARPER and I and the EPW Committee passed unanimously would be totally undone here. The bipartisan gang spent months carefully and considerably negotiating this agreement with the White House. All of these meaningful investments

that I talked about yesterday would be gone: the new bridge program—gone; supplemental funding for the Appalachian Development Highway System—gone; broadband funding needed to help close the digital divide—gone.

We have come too far to throw all of this bipartisan work away on this substitute. Time is of the essence. Let's give our States the certainty that they need.

By the way, there is permitting reform in this bill, right here, as we look at it. Let's get this across the finish line. So I would urge my colleagues to vote no on this amendment.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, I, too, rise in opposition to Senator LEE's amendment.

This amendment does not reform the Federal-aid highway system as we know it; it dismantles it. It eliminates the Federal funding that each of our States relies on to build, repair, and to maintain our Federal highways. It would strike the entire surface reauthorization in this bill before us and replace it with an interstate highway-only bill with top-line funding of less than \$20 billion over 5 years.

At a time when we already have some 45,000 structurally deficient bridges in our Nation, this amendment would leave American travelers at risk due to serious disinvestment.

Senators have come together, Democrats and Republicans, to bring this infrastructure bill to the floor because we recognize that States are in need of serious investment to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure.

This is not a partisan issue. On the Environment and Public Works Committee, where Senator CAPITO and I lead, we voted unanimously to advance a highway bill out of committee on a unanimous vote—20 to nothing. That bill increases the top-line funding for our highway Federal programs by 34 percent to a little over \$300 billion—the highest amount of highway funding ever authorized by this Congress—and it is much needed.

Senator LEE's amendment would go in the exact opposite direction, unfortunately. It would reduce the funding in our bill to less than \$20 billion. That is a cut of about 95 percent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 2255

The question is on agreeing to Lee amendment No. 2255.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) and

the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE).

The result was announced—yeas 20, nays 78, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 295 Leg.]

YEAS—20

Barrasso	Daines	Lee
Blackburn	Ernst	Lummis
Boozman	Grassley	Paul
Braun	Hagerty	Rubio
Cornyn	Johnson	Sasse
Cotton	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cruz	Lankford	

NAYS—78

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Romney
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hoeven	Rounds
Blunt	Hyde-Smith	Sanders
Booker	Kaine	Schatz
Brown	Kelly	Schumer
Burr	King	Scott (SC)
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Capito	Leahy	Shelby
Cardin	Lujan	Sinema
Carper	Manchin	Smith
Casey	Markey	Stabenow
Cassidy	Marshall	Sullivan
Collins	McConnell	Tester
Coons	Menendez	Thune
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Tillis
Cramer	Moran	Toomey
Crapo	Murkowski	Tuberville
Duckworth	Murphy	Van Hollen
Durbin	Murray	Warner
Feinstein	Ossoff	Warnock
Fischer	Padilla	Warren
Gillibrand	Peters	Whitehouse
Hassan	Portman	Wicker
Hawley	Reed	Wyden
Heinrich	Risch	Young

NOT VOTING—2

Graham	Inhofe
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 20, the nays are 78. Under the previous order requiring 60 votes for adoption of this amendment, the amendment is not agreed to.

The amendment (No. 2255) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

RECESS

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, at this time I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess until 2:15 p.m.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 1:12 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. LUJÁN).

INVESTING IN A NEW VISION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND SURFACE TRANSPORTATION IN AMERICA ACT—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

WEALTH GAP

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, as a former mayor, I have a sense as to how important physical infrastructure—roads, bridges, water systems, wastewater plants—are, and I am delighted that we are finally beginning to address our long-neglected physical infrastructure. That is enormously important.

But I will tell you what is even more important, and that is to address the human infrastructure, the needs of the